

Reviews

Liber Croceus, ed. **Branislav M. Nedeljković**. Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, III division, vol. 24, Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1997. Pages xxxii + 645.

Liber Croceus (The Yellow Book) is the last statute book of the Dubrovnik Republic, covering the period from 1460 to 1803.¹ This source, indispensable to those studying Dubrovnik's past, was, until recently, available only in the manuscript copies that are scattered among the archives and libraries of Dubrovnik, Cavtat, Zadar, and Zagreb.

Although the editor was expected to produce the information which customarily accompanies such a critical edition of a manuscript, nothing of the kind was presented in the introductory part (pp. ix-xxxii), nor even a detailed description of the original with references to the preserved copies. Nedeljković made no attempt whatsoever to consider Frano Gondola's compendium (16th c.), which was usually copied together with the *Liber Croceus*. Instead, he elaborates certain clauses of The Yellow Book, an approach that is most doubtful and far from scientific.

In terms of quality, the edition of the text itself is satisfactory, though inconsistent and inaccurate at times. There are some errors in transcription, yet not vast in number.² The editor's decision to establish a reference link between each separate clause and its original source in the register of the Great Council has proved to be most constructive and useful. In re-arranging the text into chapters, the editor was primarily guided by a chronological criteria, that is, the dates of their promulgation. As a result, some chapters contain clauses of completely diverse subject matter (e.g., chapter 86). Nedeljković's decision to number the chapters of the *Liber Croceus* and omit the mark signifying the beginning of a new page in the original is vulnerable to criticism. The problem here is that the clauses of the *Liber Croceus* were traditionally cited either by the folio number (*charta, folium*), or page number (*pagina*, sometimes also *folium*) of the original.³ Although deficient, this system of marking served its purpose, whereas the novelty Nedeljković introduced is deceptive. In the

¹ Chronologically, it was preceded by the Statute of 1272 (*Liber statutorum Civitatis Ragusii compositus anno 1272*, ed. V. Bogišić and C. Jireček. Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum Meridionalium, IX. Zagreb: JAZU, 1904), *Liber omnium reformationum* ("Liber Omnium Reformationum", ed. A. Solovjev. In: *Istorisko-pravni spomenici, I. Dubrovački zakoni i uredbe*. Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, II.6. Beograd: SANU, 1936) and *Liber viridis* (ed. Branislav M. Nedeljković. Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, III.23. Beograd: SANU, 1984).

² For instance, in chapters 19, 63/14 and 35, 182, 231, 280, 304, 312, 313, 321, 331, 332, 356, 357, 361, 364, 382, 425, 434 and 440.

³ The original bears the old folio pagination at the top right corner, and a more recent renumbering of the pages at the top left corner (cf. State Archives of Dubrovnik, ser. XXI.1 *Leggi e istruzioni*, vol. 12a.1). The compendium of the Great Council, prepared by Chancellor Achile Pozza in 1624, refers to both old and new pagination (cf. The National and University Library in Zagreb, the Collection of Manuscripts and Rare Books, R 3271), as does *Liber Croceus* itself (chapter 311). See also Ivan Strohal, *Statuti primorskih gradova i općina: Bibliografički nacrt*. Zagreb: JAZU, 1911: pp. 82-83.

appendix, however, the page numbers denoting the beginning of each clause have been listed (pp. 551-580), but in the text itself the author failed to indicate the beginning of a new page. In fact, this goes far beyond a mere disregard of tradition and the customary methods of editing, but tends to interfere with the efficiency of consulting the text itself. For instance, a reference in a Ragusan source, such as “in Libro Crocei, ch. 125,” cannot be traced directly in Nedeljković’s edition. In addition, Nedeljković’s innovation also hampers the use of the internal references of the *Liber Croceus* itself, which are great in number.⁴

The edition is provided with the author and subject indexes. The latter deserves to be praised, as it offers a considerable number of entries and an impressive scope of context. However, one mild criticism of Nedeljković’s edition concerns his ambiguous cross-references and inattentive proofreading: the singular and plural forms of the same word are often separately listed, the Latin and Italian version are indexed without the necessary cross-references, and sometimes even the same word appears twice.⁵

⁴ For example, in chapter 95 (according to Nedeljković) a reference is made to “Libro Zallo ad carte 16”, and similarly in chapters 192, 222, 230, 238, 253, 267, 271, 272, 277, 278, 280, 286, 302, 303, 342, 356, 441, etc.; cf. also the regulations from the Register of the Great Council quoted with chapters 67, 120, 161.

⁵ Cf., for example, *capo-capi*; *cessione-cessioni*; *fameglio-famegli*; *broglio*, appearing twice; *prohibitione*, appearing twice, and once again as *proibitione*; *rector-rettor* without cross-reference; *proveditores* and *provisores* without cross-reference, the latter being confused with *provisiones*.

Despite the aforementioned deficiencies, this critical edition of *Liber Croceus*—one of the major sources for the study of legal system, governmental institutions, and other aspects of Ragusan society—is a welcome addition to the research of Dubrovnik’s past.

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Ante Marinović, *Dubrovačko pomorsko pravo: povijesni pregled*. Book 1: Statutarno pomorsko pravo srednjovjekovne dubrovačke komune. Split: Književni krug, 1998. Pages 484.

The first volume of Ante Marinović’s recently published historical survey of Ragusan maritime law covers the statutory regulations of the communal period (before 1358), while the forthcoming second volume is to trace the development of maritime law until the fall of the Republic.

In the introductory chapter (pp. 13-94), which is based mainly on older literature the author provides an outline of Dubrovnik’s history, discussing each period in a separate section. Although the absence of recent studies on the subject is significant, this work could be useful to readers with meager knowledge of Dubrovnik’s past.

While discussing the period of Byzantine domination over Dubrovnik, the author centers upon the expansion of the Ragusan district, ethnic symbiosis, and the organization of government. Rather scanty sources offer evidence on the development of shipping and the resulting early economic rise of Dubrovnik. During the period of Venetian domination (1204-1358, with occasional intervals), Ragusan commercial interests turned inland, though maritime trade contin-